

Using state vehicles wisely

With the road construction going on around the valley, it seems everybody is experiencing a touch of "road rage," even state employees. It seemed an appropriate time to remind everyone that when you get behind the wheel of a state vehicle, the vehicle is marked and everyone on the road is watching how you drive and where you go. License plate numbers help track any complaints made against state drivers. (And Joe Q. Public knows it.)

All complaints are forwarded to the driver's supervisor for investigation. Complaints are usually concerning poor driving habits or inappropriate use of a state-owned vehicle. Drivers are given the opportunity to respond to any complaint about their driving, or use of a state-owned vehicle in their possession. Although many complaints are in response to employees' doing their jobs, such as transporting minor children to and from school and appointments, there are also many valid and disturbing complaints.

An example of such a complaint recently came to the attention of the Division of Fleet Operations. A driver of a state-owned vehicle not only ran another driver off the road along the I-15 construction area, but he then turned and gestured at the driver of the other vehicle as he sped away. Actions of this nature can result in

the loss of driving privileges.

"The opportunity to use a state vehicle comes with a responsibility and a trust," reminds Raylene Ireland, Executive Director of Administrative Services, in a pamphlet listing all rules related to the use of a state vehicle. "The Motor Pool operation is funded with public dollars. The Motor Pool vehicles bear the state seal and official license plates.

These markings represent the authority and the dignity of the state of Utah." It is true that many of the complaints are unfounded or blown out of proportion. However, the following actions should be avoided while driving a state vehicle:

Driving while talking on a cell-phone; driving while applying make-up; speeding; aggressive driving; using state a vehicle for personal business; illegal parking and making lewd gestures at other drivers.

"All of us who drive state vehicles have the trust to use the vehicles in an appropriate manner," said Ireland. "The presence of a Motor Pool vehicle on the highway or parked at a location sends a message to citizens that the driver of the vehicle is on an errand of official business. Good judgment must always be used to see that vehicles are used and operated in a manner that is consistent with the official business for which they were authorized, and to keep faith with citizens that public resources are carefully and wisely used.

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